

# Personal recollections

*Reminiscences of Early Days*

*Personal Recollections of Harvey Wood*

With an introduction and notes by John B. Goodman III 1955 *Privately Printed: Pasadena, California*

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## Note

I WISH to thank the following people for their kind cooperation and valuable assistance, in the preparation of the introduction.

Mr. R. W. G. Vail, Director, and Dorothy C. Brack, Librarian of The New-York Historical Society; The New York Public Library; Carl C. Cutler, of the Marine Historical Association, Inc., Mystic, Connecticut; The Marine Research Society, Salem, Massachusetts; Caroline Wentzel, formerly Librarian of the California section of the California State Library, Sacramento; Eleanor Bancroft, of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California; Wilbur Smith, James Mink and Ralph Lyons of the University Library, University of California at Los Angeles; Glen Dawson, Dawson's Bookshop, Los Angeles; and especially, Percy Wood, of Melones, deceased; Mervyn Wood, of Melones; and Mrs. L. G. Davis, of San Francisco.

IT IS planned that from time to time, under the heading SCRAPs OF CALIFORNIANA, to issue in a limited number, books or pamphlets—some to be given as keepsakes, others to be for sale. These will be reprints of rare, or little known and generally hard to obtain material dealing principally with the early history of the State of California. This is SCRAPs OF CALIFORNIANA, No. 1.

## Introduction

John B. Goodman III

THIS LITTLE OVERLAND and Californiana nugget written in 1878, and published in 1896, is so scarce that Mr. Cowan, the author of *A bibliography of the history of California 1510-1930* did not know of its existence, and the eminent Dr. Henry R. Wagner, had never seen or heard of it until 1936. Probably the reason for this was the fact that only twelve copies were printed.

Edna Bryan Buckbee had access to a copy, for in 1932, in her *Pioneer Days of Angel's Camp*, she quotes very briefly from Wood's *Recollections* and states that it was "printed by Myron Hill Reed of Angel's Camp newspaper, *Mountain Echo* 1900." Again in her book *The Saga of Old Tuolumne*, 1935, in the bibliography she gives the date as June, 1878, as mentioned in the text on the last page of Wood's book. This date actually was the year that Wood wrote it, and most likely, as so many were that year, written at the request of Hubert Howe Bancroft, who was gathering data on the early history of California for his well known thirty-nine volume *Works*, and perhaps it was never sent in as there is no allusion to Wood, or his *Recollections* in Bancroft. Both Buckbee dates are in error as it will subsequently be noted.

It was on July 27, 1937, and a broiling hot day in the Stanislaus River canyon, that I stopped at a little roadside store on the Calaveras County side of the river in a small settlement called Melones, the name being larger than the place. This was the site of the old Robinsons Ferry, on what is today Highway 49, between Jamestown and Angels Camp, in the heart of the Mother Lode country. There I met and had a long talk with genial Percy Wood, the second son of Harvey, who operated this store, built near the site of the old Ferry House which had been destroyed by fire in 1909. Percy was born and spent his life at the ferry and the following facts are a few that he related to me:

In 1896, the year following his father's death, the old homestead burned to the ground, destroying everything, including many valuable papers, records, account books, pictures and so on. By some

means that he could not recall, the manuscript of his father's *Personal Recollections*, “which we used to refer to as his ‘diary’,” was all that survived. In order that it too should not be lost, and that a record of his father's overland trip through Mexico to California in 1849, and of his life at Robinsons Ferry, might find its way into friendly hands and be preserved, Carlton Wood, Percy's elder brother, took the manuscript that same year to the old Mountain Echo Job Printing Office, Angels Camp, Calaveras County, California, and had twelve copies printed.

Today I know of but one other copy to have survived the years. There is a possibility that a third copy may also have weathered the times. At least this one copy has found its way into friendly hands, and to see that Carlton Wood's wish is carried out, it is once again entrusted to the printer for a slightly larger edition, and a more dignified format be fitting its contents. The spelling and punctuation has been retained as in the original.

Harvey Wood was born in Bedford, Westchester County, New York, November 13, 1828, one of a family of four sons and two daughters, of Alfred and Electa (Fountain) Wood. At the age of fifteen Harvey Wood left home in New York, and for five years was employed as a clerk in a store in New Jersey.

“It is January 1849, hope sparkles in every eye—joy beams upon every countenance—all look bright and smiling, and give no token of the horrible future that must and will come (to many of them). Gold—Gold—California—California—California is the merry shout of thousands...every vessel bound out teems with our best as well as the very worst of our citizens—they are as sanguine as though they already had their pockets filled with the shining metal which has allured them....

“Our citizens are mad, stark staring mad. ... A vast mixed population are crowding to a particular region far removed—all are animated by one absorbing desire—to get gold; they have no other motive....

“Every mail, every ship and steamer that is now reaching this great city, comes loaded with new and strange tales of new found treasures; and the gold fever rages more and more—is hourly on

the increase—and hundreds who two weeks ago laughed at the idea of going to California are now selling xii property, sacrificing their business, and rushing forward to fulfill their destiny.\*

Excerpt from the New York *Daily Herald*, February 19, 1849; page 1, col. 3-4-5. From the port of New York alone, sixty-nine vessels sailed in January for California and way points, and fifty-two in February.

In this atmosphere of excitement, young Harvey sometime after January 17, 1849, joined one of the many California gold mining associations then being formed on the Eastern seaboard. The following advertisement appeared in the *New York Tribune* for the above date:

“OVERLAND TO CALIFORNIA—The Kit Carson Association\* to be composed of young men of good health and character is now forming—we invite particular enquiry into plan of the journey and the method of mining proposed by this association....

This association was named after the famous Christopher (Kit) Carson, frontier scout, indian agent, trapper, guide and mountain man, 1809-1868. He had no connection with this Association.

On February 6, 1849, in the California column of the *New York Tribune* appeared this ad:

“FOR CALIFORNIA VIA TEXAS,—Starting positively for Galveston on the 12th inst. in the fine packet ship William B. Travis. We get ourselves (all expenses paid) two mules (valuable in mining as men) and three months provisions each to California early in May for \$110 per man. Full particulars by D. Hough, Jr., 1 Front st. President of the Carson Association.”

“N.B. The Association meets this evening at 7 o'clock, at fourteenth Ward Headquarters, Grand at corner of Elizabeth st. Members pay their passage this day. List of membership still open.”

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On Tuesday, February 13, 1849, under command of Capt. Balles, the Connecticut built full-rigged ship *William B. Travis* less than a year old, and built for the Galveston Texas cotton trade, sailed for that port from New York, with the Kit Carson Association.

Of the hundreds of organized companies that were to leave for California, during the year 1849, the Kit Carson Association was among the very first to sail for the gold regions.

The lure and desire for gold must have been overwhelming and among the many perils confronting the eager gold hunters, that of the cholera was one of the greatest. The Asiatic cholera, which had made its appearance along the Atlantic seaboard early in the winter of 1848, began its ravages on those parties moving by the Southern routes, and the worst attacks occurred at the end of February, and the hardest hit were Brownsville, Laredo and San Antonio.

The Carson Association was singularly fortunate in the fact that they lost but one member from this dreaded cause, while all around them the mortality was fearful.

The first emigrants to leave for Corpus Christi, were advised (by the promoters) to proceed by way of El Paso del Norte, but because of the difficulties met along the way "they were forced to cross the lower Rio Grande and travel through Mexico." There were many signs of the late war with Mexico, still to be seen, "the ground was still strewn with grape shot and cannon balls and fragments of discarded accoutrements" and a great many American deserters and renegades were met with as well as Indians.

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Remnants of the Kit Carson Association seem to have taken a route from Monclova to Jimenez followed by very few parties. This route while nearly five hundred miles shorter was a hazardous short cut, through an arid, barren waste country, and it probably was seldom ever considered, and never advocated. The more favored way was to travel to Monterey by the way of Roma, and Mier, hence to Parras; or from Monclova, south to Parras, hence in a sweep to the west and north to de Guajuquilla, (Jimenez) where the trail joined with the short cut Wood speaks of. At approximately the same time the Carson Association was in this vicinity, the Audubon party was present, but they traveled by the way of Monterey, as did A. B. Clarke, a member of the Hampden Trading and Mining Company of Westfield, Massachusetts, and later J. E. Durivage, a correspondent for the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*. Some of the other companies to undertake the trip through Mexico, to California at this time and place, to name but a couple, were The Essex Overland Mining and Trading Company, of Boston, Mass.; the Mississippi Rangers, of Aberdeen, Miss.; the Berkshire and California Mining Company, of North Adams, Mass.; and an unidentified company from

Georgia; \* also the Mazatlan Rangers, \* xv presumably a Massachusetts association, who arrived at Corpus Christi, from New Orleans, late in January.

Probably the Kinney Rangers, a California company of forty persons under the command of Captain Walter Harvey, who were in Corpus Christi buying mules and horses, the same time the Carson Association was there. The Mazatlan Rangers, were composed of two divisions. Company No. 1, presumed to be from Massachusetts, and had forty-eight members, under the command of E. W. Abbott. Four members were left behind at New Orleans. Company No. 2, probably was formed in New Orleans, and consisted of fifteen members, made up of a heterogeneous crowd, several of whom were foreigners. They were under the command of Captain Meyer Helfer (?). The two divisions were to join forces at Corpus Christi, but apparently never did. Short of Laredo, Company No. 1 split into six separate parties; three traveling the desert route taken by Wood.

Proceeding from Corpus Christi, what was left of the Kit Carson Association \* in due time arrived at Cuatro-Cienegas, where they joined forces with the remnants of the Hampden Trading and Mining Company and of the Mazatlan Rangers, who it would appear were traveling this same short cut, with xvi John H. Peoples acting as guide, and who apparently had now decided to go to the gold fields himself.

The Port Lavaca *Journal* of (March) 9 says: "A company of gentlemen from New York, arrived here on Saturday last [March 3] by [the] steamer *Yacht*, on their way to California. They brought with them a baggage wagon to be drawn by mules. They are provided with a smelting furnace, forges, tenting boxes, spades, shovels, bellows, sieves, pickaxes, and everything convenient for finding and operating in the gold mines. Some of them have purchased horses here, at prices ranging from \$15 to \$30 and others go up the country further to purchase.

"This company is a portion of the [Kit] *Carson Association* [Division No. 1] which left New York on the 13th [of February] but after arriving at Galveston, on their way to the Rio Grande, this portion became satisfied that they were on the wrong track, changed their course and came this way. The route they propose to go is by San Antonio, Fredericksburgh, San Saba, Concho, Paso del Norte, and the Gila. They will undoubtedly find a good wagon road the whole route, with plenty of game, grass, and water: and a more healthy, pleasant, natural route of that distance cannot be found on earth. If they meet difficulty, it will be from inexperience in campaigning. They will probably get to the gold regions before their companions and with half the cost and danger.

"They left this place on Wednesday last [March 7] for the 'diggins.' They intend examining the San Pedro and Prieto rivers, and if they find gold enough there, they will go no further. May their visions of adventure and gold be more than realized.

“There will probably be 1000 persons on the route between Lavaca and San Francisco, by the first of next May.

“The following named persons compose this party: George W. Harper, B. H. Howell, Jonathan K. Newall, Chauncey P. Caufield, William H. Larkin, William M. Bevins, James Everitt, Wesley Gilbert,<sup>\*</sup> A. W. Dyar, [Dayer?], James Q. Adams, David Burkhalter, Charles L. Lincoln, John A. Hull, and \*John Kates.”

(\*A. W. Dayer, Michigan, and John Hates, Apalachicola, Florida, were not original members of the Company.)

“Four companies left Lavaca, Texas, on the 16th [March] for California. These were: The Defiance Company from Defiance, Ohio<sup>\*\*</sup><sup>\*</sup>; the Clarksville Company from Clarksville, Tennessee, a company from Natchez,<sup>\*\*\*</sup><sup>\*</sup> consisting of thirty members; and a company from East Mississippi,<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup><sup>\*</sup> composed of fourteen men.” New Orleans *Delta*, March 27; reprinted in the New York *Herald*, April 7, 1849.

(\*\*Defiance Gold Hunters Expedition, later name changed to Ohio Company; Natchez California Company; \*\*\*\*Mississippi Mining and Trading Company.)

By the time these various companies traveling through Mexico, reached Chihuahua, they were all thoroughly inter-mixed and traveling in small parties.<sup>\*</sup> So it was with Durivage and Wood, the latter with only fifteen of the original Carson Association's members. Both Durivage and Wood arrived in the city the same day—May 1, 1849.

Fractions of the Mazatlan Rangers, fractions of fractions of A. B. Clarke's Hampden Trading and Mining Company now under the guidance of Dr. William T. Brent, (much against his will, having refused the command earlier). In this party was J. E. Durivage, the New Orleans *Picayune* correspondent; part of the Mississippi Rangers and parts of two New York Companies. They traveled the long route to Chihuahua, by the way of Monterey. Also with this party on arrival in Chihuahua were a very small party under J. M. Allen, and that section of the Kit Carson Association in which Wood was traveling—and now under the command of a member from that Company. George Kensett. Parties were arriving and departing from Chihuahua nearly every day.

Peoples probably traveled with the party as far as Warner's Ranch, where he turned off at the fork in the road going to San Diego, with those who wanted to travel the rest of the way by vessel. He was in San Diego over the Fourth of July,<sup>\*</sup> and no doubt took part in that uproarious celebration held

xvii at the Plaza in Old Town, and participated in by the Boundary Commission. Wood spent the Fourth near the Pueblo of Los Angeles. When the first of these mixed companies finally reached the mines, the balance of the members were strung out along the back trail for 500 miles.

“The Fourth of July was celebrated with much spirit in San Diego.” The Mexican Boundary Commission came to the Plaza from the *Caroline* at noon, and Major Emory read the Declaration of Independence in English, Mr. Gahegan. in Spanish. Colonel Weller delivered the oration, speaking on the spirit of 1776 and 1812. The address ended, they all moved off in a procession to the plains for a barbecue. The ladies who heeded the procession soon retired after partaking of the meats, as did most of the Americans, the latter after imbibing copiously of the spirits not alluded to in the oration. Whiskey barrel heads were stove in and boxes of gin cracked out. The Indians were invited to partake of what was left, and they went after it tooth and nail. Three Indians were soon loud in their demonstration of America and Americans. Towards night they paraded through the streets, with a tattered American flag, and drum and fife, cheering for the people and Government of the United States.

The festivities were concluded with a grand ball, given at the adobe home of Don Juan Bandini. The ladies of the officers, and of the California residents of San Diego, together with the officers of the Army, the Boundary Commission, American and Mexican, and the American citizens being present.

Arriving at the southern mines July 30, 1849, Harvey Wood began seven years of mining and prospecting, beginning along the Merced River, but very soon he decided the rich country around Carson Hill, on the Stanislaus River, was the place to make his strike. He reached Robinsons Ferry August 15th, and made it his headquarters. Like most miners of the day he appears to have rushed from one strike to another, and it would seem that he usually was one of the first on the site of a rich strike. I believe that he must have worked for the owners of Robinsons Ferry in between prospecting ventures. Percy Wood said that his father, while operating the ferry was quite friendly with Joaquin Murieta. This famous bandit's exploits covered the period between 1850 and 1853, and Wood could have known him, and certainly he heard plenty concerning this character's many



wild deeds, as Joaquin was mining at Murphys Diggings, in Calaveras County, in April of 1850 and as late as 1852, and was much in evidence around the neighborhood of Columbia and Angels Camp, and even Indian Creek, just below Robinsons Ferry. "My father" continued Percy, "was quite friendly with Joaquin, and for a very good reason. Joaquin in return was careful that nothing should happen to the man who made it possible for himself and his members to rapidly xviii cross the river when the occasion warranted, which seemed to have been quite often." Harvey Wood did not, however, buy into the ferry until 1856.

As has been told many times, and I repeat, John W. Robinson and Stephen Mead, partners, arrived on the Stanislaus River in 1848, establishing a trading post and a ferry across that river from Calaveras County to Tuolumne County, and linking Angels Camp and Carson, to Tuttletown, Jamestown, and Sonora on the opposite side. This ferry was also the most direct from Stockton to these latter places.

According to J. A. Smith, the historian, "They first had a small boat capable of accommodating foot passengers... the buildings connected with the ferry have always been located on the Calaveras side of the river, the old ferry house was destroyed by fire in March, 1909."

"The Ferry House" as it was popularly called was a two story structure, where people traveling from one county to another could stay overnight if they wished. Inside were kept a number of early day relics, and writings of Harvey Wood, and which it seems survived the fire of 1896, only to be destroyed when this famous old landmark ironically was set afire by workmen staying there during the construction of the bridge which was to take the place of Wood's cherished ferry boat. The workmen were a little overzealous in their labors to change an era, a careless cigarette was blamed for the inadvertent fire.

Emmett P. Joy states that the Mead interest was obtained by George Graham in 1853 for the sum of \$10,000; xix a man named French obtained it a little later, and eventually conveyed it to Wood. Harvey Wood bought the Robinson interest in the ferry in 1856, and continued to operate it all the rest of his life.

Percy stated that his father planted the first pear trees in the State adjoining the ferry, but what he most likely meant was, the first pear trees in Calaveras County. At any rate he had quite a number of very fine pear trees, and no doubt, "did a good business in supplying the travelers crossing the river as well as others" with the fruit from these trees, many of which were still flourishing there in 1937.

In the early days these ferries were an important asset to the community, as well as being very lucrative for their owners. In 1849 the miners paid into the coffers of the ferryman at Robinsons Ferry, for ferriage across the Stanislaus River, \$ 10,000 in a six-weeks period. A little further down the river as late as November, 1850, more than 100 heavily freighted wagons passed through Knight's Ferry enroute to the mining towns beyond, and stretching in an uninterrupted line nearly forty miles long over the countryside leading to Stockton.

By 1853 there appears to have been approximately twelve ferries operating on the Stanislaus River, all doing a more or less thriving business. They all changed hands from time to time, the new owners giving new names to them. Robinsons being one of the exceptions in the latter respect until recent times. In 1854 Robinsons Ferry had an assessed value of \$9,100; Abbeys Ferry two miles east of the present Parrotts xx Ferry bridge was assessed at \$8,000. In 1855, Keelers Ferry, just west of the present Knights Landing, was sold for \$12,000.

By 1854 there was one bridge over the Stanislaus River, that located at Knights Ferry, and by 1856 supposedly another of the suspension type. But there were five bridges over the Mokelumne River, just to the south, and five over the Calaveras River to the north.

Travel over these ferries for years after the height of the gold rush had passed continued to be very heavy. Robinsons Ferry, earning for its owners as much as one hundred and fifty dollars a day. This settlement is now called Melones, but in 1849 the gold camp of that name was two miles to the west, and had a population varying from three to five thousand persons. A very rare mineral, a telluride of nickel, mined near here and called Melonite, is named after the town of Melones, and is found in but very few parts of the world. Today a fine looking marker, erected by the California

Centennials Commission, with a stone base furnished by the Angels Camp Lions Club, May 22, 1949, stands near the old site occupied by the ferry buildings. Previous to this, October 9, 1937, it was one of five historic sites marked in Calaveras County by the Director of and for the State Department of Natural Resources, George D. Nordenholt.

Harvey Wood was interested in mining all of his life, and from the early 1870's on was agent for the South Carolina Mines, and for many years was owner of the Adelaide Mines, xxi named for his wife, which had a reputation for being the richest in the country. From a space of four square feet he took out \$1,000. He was also the owner of a ranch of 160 acres. Elected to the Board of Supervisors of Calaveras County, in 1873, he represented his district until 1883, when he refused longer to serve as an official of the County. His unswerving honesty of purpose and aggressive character were felt in every department, and the people of the whole County felt this loss. In 1879 he was appointed Postmaster at Robinsons Ferry and held that position to the end. He was a Democrat and one of the most substantial citizens in Calaveras County.

Miss Marinda Adelaide Gee, of Harlow, New Hampshire,\* came to San Francisco to visit a sister that had come to California for her health, and who was acquainted with Wood. They were introduced by the sister, and were married shortly thereafter in San Francisco in 1864. It was a deep and lasting love, and Wood named everything possible for her, every new ferry boat was named *Adelaide*. They had three children, Carlton, Percy, and Allie, (Mrs. John Egan). A younger brother of Harvey's, James A. Wood, of New York, (May 20, 1835-November 18, 1906) also resided at the ferry.

This is given as her birthplace on the tombstone. other sources as well as Mrs. Davis state that she was a native of Massachusetts.

The death of Harvey Wood, on March 12, 1895, in his 66th year, was somewhat sudden and followed but a few days of illness. The funeral took place the following Thursday, the remains being buried in the family plot in the Altaville Protestant Cemetery. People from all parts of the xxii county attended the last rites, anxious to pay their tribute of respect to his memory. The funeral was

one of the largest ever seen in Angels Camp. He was survived by his widow, two sons, a daughter and two brothers.

His widow continued to live at the ferry for some time. Having resided at the ferry for over fifty years, she decided to move to Angels Camp, where after a few years she passed away June 2, 1923, at the advanced age of 89 years and 9 months, having been born on October 8, 1833. She was buried in the family plot in the Altaville Cemetery.

Carlton H. Wood, the eldest of the three children, was born at Robinsons Ferry, October 26, 1866. He died January 18, 1940, and is buried in the Altaville Cemetery. He is survived by his widow Elizabeth Wood, living at Angels Camp. There were no children.

Percy Wood, the second child was born September 9, 1870, and lived at Robinsons Ferry (Melones) his entire life. He had served as a member of the County Democratic Central Committee for many years, and as Postmaster of Melones for twenty years and for sixteen years operated a general merchandise store. He died at his home following a short illness, Sunday, January 23, 1944, the committal being made in the family plot in the Altaville Cemetery. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Ethel Carthy Wood, of Melones; a daughter Mrs. Vera F. Carley, of Angels Camp, born February 18, 1903; two sons, Mervyn R. Wood, born September 21, 1911, (?) of Melones; and Harvey P. Wood, of Oakland, born October 8, 1899; also a sister, Mrs. Allie xxiii Egan, of San Francisco; and a grandson; William Wood, of Melones.

Mrs. John (Allie Wood) Egan, the daughter, was born at Robinsons Ferry, September 10, 1874. She married Mr. John Egan, of San Francisco, where she lived until her death, October 30, 1948, and the entombment, at Cypress Lawn Mausoleum, San Francisco. She had one child, a daughter, Adelaide M. Egan, (Mrs. L. G. Davis), born at Angels Camp, December 26, 1899, and now residing in San Francisco.

## **LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE KIT CARSON ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK.**

THE FOLLOWING LIST is from the New York *Tribune*, February 14, 1849. The names marked with an asterisk are not in that list, but appear in the C. W. Haskin list, page 431, of *The Argonauts of California* New York, 1890. The names and initials where different in parentheses are as given in Haskins; those marked with a dagger are from a partial list in the New York *Herald* of April 7, 1849, 1-3. D. Hough, Jr., the President, remained behind. His name with several others does not appear in the Haskin list.

D. Hough, Jr., President Anderson, W. T., Secretary (Ackley, G.) Ackerly, Charles of N. Y. Adams, James †Q. Monroe, Michigan \*Backstet, Jr. C. \*Bassaid, N. H.

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Baxter, Charles Bevins, Wm. M. (A. W. M.) †N. Y. City Bennett, James L. Bessy, W. H. Bohn, William E. Boyd, John J. \*Burkhalter, D†avid Boonsboro, Md. \*Carroll, J. Caufield, Chauncey T. (F) †P. N. Y. C. Clark, H. H. Clement, (S) Charles Davidson, Charles R. Downing, John H. Enles, Walter † Eales, W., N. Y. C. Everett, J†ames H., New York City Frost, William S. \*Fouse, Jacob M. of Baltimore Gilbert, W†esley, C., New York City (Gray) Grey, George W. \*Hall, J. A. †Hull, John: Morristown, N. J. Harper, (J) W. G. †Geo. W., N.Y.C. Higgin, H. M. Hinckley, (J) W. H. Hitchcock, John Howell, B. H. †Buffalo, N. Y. Huyler, Abraham of Keyport N.J. \*Kensett, G. [eorge] Kiggin, W. M., probably Higgin Knevels, H. K. Larkin, William H. †N. Y. City \*Lincoln, G. L. †Chas., Syracuse, N.Y. Marsh, John F. Miner, John †New York City Moffit, James Nash, Gaines H. Nash, J. F. Newell, J. R. (K) †Newall, K. Johnathan, Boston, Mass. Osborn, Alonzo Osborn, Edwin Osborne, James M. \*Platt, J. R. Reeves, H. Reeves, T. R. \*Revels, U. Rice, Epam? Ricker, A. S. Ricker, Peter Ricker, John J. Smith, W. H. †Samuel H., N. Y. C. \*Soule, A. G. \*Sumner, W. L. Taylor, A. S. Turner, Antonio Wallin, J. Wood, Harvey of New Jersey

#### NOT MEMBERS

Gridle, Henry \*Lake, J. S. Wilson, E. G., Miss.

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HARVEY WOOD, Nov. 1828, Mar. 1895 Taken in late 1880's or early 1890. Native of New York.  
Came overland in 1849.

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### Reminiscences of Early Days by Harvey Wood

PERSONAL recollections of Harvey Wood, who left New York, February 13th, 1849, for the gold fields of California, as a member of the "Carson Association," a company organized in New York City, in January, 1849, to proceed to California, via. Galveston, Texas, thence overland to the gold mines.\* The company consisted of fifty-three members, from several States in the Union. We had no property in common, the object of the organization being for mutual protection during the trip overland. We sailed from New York on board [the] Ship William B. Travis,\* and arrived at Galveston, Texas, February 28th, 1849. The passage occupying 2 only fifteen days, made the time rather short for our mixed company to get well acquainted with each other, but most of us being young men, looked forward to realizing a fortune in two or three years after arriving in California. During the passage all kinds of preparations were made for the prosecution of the journey after reaching Galveston; some busied themselves making tents, others, who considered their outfit for the journey complete, were preparing buckskin purses or bags in which to keep their gold dust. Some of the bags made would hold at least one hundred pounds of gold dust. One young man after exhausting his supply of buckskin making bags of large dimensions, concluded that if the pay gravel did not contain more than one shovelful of gold to one hundred of dirt, mining in his opinion would not prove an entire failure.

From Galveston, they were to ascend the Brazos, to San Felipe, and form a caravan for the Paso del Norte, then cross over the mountains to the Gila River, and follow Lieut. Emory's trail to San Diego.

She was a three-mast, full-rigged ship with two decks and a billet head, 569,28/95 tons; 133 feet 5 inches long; a 30-foot 8-inch beam, and drew 12 feet of water. Medium model, deck cabin, built at Portland, Connecticut, by Gildersleeve & Son, in 1848. She seems to have carried no other gold seekers after this trip.

The person who first conceived the idea<sup>\*</sup> of getting up the Carson Association in New York, was going to act as Captain and guide of the Company and pilot us through in good shape, he had maps of the various routes posted up in his office and to hear him explain how easy it was to make the journey from Texas overland to California, most any one would look upon it as a pleasure trip, then he manifested so much interest in our welfare, advising us very particularly as to the necessary articles to take along as our outfit, "needles and thread and vest buttons," he considered indispensable articles. On passing the Narrows coming out of New York, we found our Captain and guide had given us the slip, in 2 fact, he found it more profitable to get up Carson Associations than to seek his fortune in California.<sup>\*</sup>

This was a typical promoter of the time, taking advantage of the gold fever, D. Hough, Jr. by name. Hough, waited only two days before he started advertising, "The second division of the Carson Association... is now forming." This Company sailed less than a month later, March 10th. The very next day he started the formation of the "3rd. division," and still later the fourth, and by this time letting the prospective members "see one of their wagons in complete trim"; something must have happened however, for in late April, nothing more is heard of either this last Company, or of Hough, Jr.

The estimated expense of the trip from New York to the gold mines of California for each member was \$150. The amount was sure to pay all necessary expenses. Our Captain and guide promised to land us in the mines, each the owner of two mules and three months provisions. The mules he thought would be good property in the mines; we could use them to pack our gold dust to San Francisco.

Our Captain and guide, who remained in New York, was well posted in affairs on the Pacific Coast at that time, and I have often thought what an ornament he would have been to the profession of Stock Brokers on California street had he found it to his interest to visit the Pacific Coast.

Before leaving New York each member had fitted himself out according to his fancy and means. The outfit of several was so singular and ridiculous that many a laugh was indulged in while looking over the articles, but which the owner, on leaving New York, considered actually

necessary. While Mr. Taylor<sup>\*</sup> (who by the way was going to California to recover a fortune he lost in the Soda water business, all the profit having been lost on corks and bottles), had at 4 great expense purchased a patent gold washer, with cogwheels, and capacity enough to hold two or three loads of pay gravel. The washer Mr. Taylor was determined to convey overland to the mines “or leave his bones on the road.” Another of the company had a complete blacksmith outfit, including bellows and anvil, that he was equally determined should reach the mines at the same time its owner could date his arrival.

Mr. A. S. Taylor, after no doubt, having his try at gold mining, returned to the soda water business. He is listed in LeCount & Strong's Directory of San Francisco for 1854 as having a factory on the corner of Jessie and Jane streets.

During the trip to Galveston, four of us agreed to mess together until we arrived at the mines. Jacob M. Fouse,<sup>\*</sup> of Baltimore, Charley Ackerly, of New York, Abraham Huyler, of Keyport, N. J., and myself, a clerk from Jersey City, on looking over our baggage found that we, like the rest, had a large amount of useless trash. We had a five story gold washer,<sup>\*</sup> that is, five sets of sieves, one above the other, graded from very coarse to fine and warranted to catch all the gold, fine or coarse, for had it not been tested thoroughly in New York to the satisfaction of an admiring crowd with a bucket of sand and scraps of lead thrown in—not a particle of the lead escaping during the washing process. Then we had axes, picks and shovels and even a ten-pound crowbar, and last, but not least of all, a box containing various acids, duly bottled and labeled, so that no bogus gold could be played on us; for with our valuable box of acids we were not to be fooled.

Jacob M. Fouse was a tinsmith by trade, and is believed to have died in 1856, in or near Grass Valley, California. A variety of fantastic devices called patent gold washers, were “invented” to separate the prospective gold hunter from his ready cash. Some were made of copper, iron, zinc and brass, some were worked by crank, the more pretentious two cranks, and some with a treadle. Some were upright forcing the panner to stand, while others by their design allowed the tired miner to sit in comfort as he supposedly made his fortune.

From Galveston we proceeded to Corpus Christie<sup>\*</sup> by steamer and schooner. Camped on the heights back of town. At this point our camp life commenced and I took my first lesson in getting up a meal, thought I was doing splendidly and was congratulating myself on the extra style in which I cooked the steak, but my mode of seasoning with powdered sugar instead of salt, hardly suited



the rest of the mess and they unanimously agreed that I had considerable to learn before they could class me as a good cook.

Our company had a few members who advised organizing in military style to insure our safe arrival in California. They managed to have themselves chosen as officers, then commenced the drilling of us raw recruits. We actually had guards stationed out day and night, going through all the forms of a soldier-life. The trouble was we had too many officers for the number of privates. Playing soldier did not last long after leaving Corpus Christie. We found that after traveling through the heat all day and getting into camp, tired and hungry and not an Indian within fifty miles of us, to be ordered out to stand guard, soon brought the reply from me "that if Mr. Lieutenant wished any guard he could stand it himself, I should not." The consequence was, from 6 that time on the military organization was in a great measure dispensed with, until it was actually necessary.

One of the starting places along the Gulf of Mexico, for emigrating parties going via Texas or Mexico, some of the others were Galveston, and Port Lavaca. Corpus Christi, at this period consisted of approximately 50 houses, with 500 inhabitants, and the outskirts of the town covered with the tents of newly arrived emigrants. Brazos Santiago, Vera Cruz, Port Isabel, and Tampico, were also starting points, but mostly by those going to California by the way of Mazatlan.

From Corpus Christie to the Rio Grande, we hired wagons to haul our baggage, arriving at Lerado,<sup>\*</sup> on the Rio Grande, our Company could not agree as to the proper way to proceed, some wished to use wagons and some were determined to use pack mules. Our mess with some sixteen others favored the pack-mule mode of traveling. The wagon party could not sacrifice their large gold washer and blacksmith shop; on that point the great Carson Association divided. Our famous five-story gold washer we apportioned among the Mexican women, where it no doubt was of more service than it could be in the gold mines of California, for I have now lived nearly twenty-nine years in the mines, have seen many and various kinds of gold washers, but none that resembled our five-story New York machine. While at Lerado, on the Rio Grande, the cholera<sup>\*</sup> made its appearance among the United States soldiers stationed near the place. After crossing the Rio Grande a few of our company were suddenly taken with the dreadful disease, proving fatal, however, to only one, by the name of Clark, from Pennsylvania. The Mexican women were kind to our sick, and poor Clark received from them and from the members of the company, 7 every attention that could

be rendered, but all in vain, his time had come. His death and burial hastened our departure from that place.

This was one of the favorite points after leaving the coast, for the emigrants to disagree as to the best choice of a route overland to the gold region. If they had not already disbanded as a company, they were sure to after their arrival at this town. one adventurer wrote that: "Laredo, has about 1500 inhabitants, mostly half-breeds and niggers with a few Americans."

The severity of the epidemic on the Western frontier, and on the frontier of Mexico was sufficient to intimidate the most courageous. The dangers and hardships of the road were not generally matters of complaint, but the cholera carried a degree of terror with it that caused the bravest to quail.

The next place of any note we visited was Caudela, where we purchased our pack and riding mules, paying for them from \$20 to \$35 each. At Caudela we were highly complimented by the Alcalda; he considered us quite an intelligent party of Americans and really believed that if we could remain one year in Caudela, we would, at the expiration of the year, become sufficiently civilized to associate with the aristocracy of the place, in fact, he was satisfied that with proper training, we might be classed as equals of the Mexicans—superiors—never. While the American character was to the natives quite a study, the Mexican character was equally so to us; all I could see the men were good for, and nearly all they appeared to do was to ride on horseback, no matter if it was a mere hovel that they lived in, with a ground floor and but little furniture, the man must have his horse, all saddled and standing at the door, ready to mount and ride, if it was only to show off his skilled horsemanship.

After getting our mules and some supplies we managed to make a start, passed through Monclova, from there to Cinigas, where we found some Americans from New Orleans,<sup>\*</sup> like ourselves, on the way to California. As we all left Cinigas in company, we made quite a show, numbering some 8 forty men. I was pleased with our southern friends; many of them had been in the Mexican war and were used to roughing it. Arriving at a large Hacienda near San Catarina, we found the owners a little excited over a raid that had been made the night previous by the Comanche Indians. They had swooped down on his place and taken forty horses from his stock. The owners of the ranch offered to furnish all volunteers horses to ride if we would go with him in pursuit of the Indians. Sixteen of us accepted the offer; so, after mounting us on good horses, accompanied by sixteen Mexican lancers to help capture the stolen stock, we left the ranch about sundown, rode fast for a few hours,

then camped until daylight, when we again saddled up. In a few hours we got on their trail which was quite fresh, but we failed to get sight of any Comanches. Captain Peoples,<sup>\*</sup> of New Orleans, was our captain during the chase and told us not to depend upon our Mexican lancers in case we had to fight, as they would probably run at the first fire, but if attacked the lancers would fire once even if they did not send a bullet within twenty feet of an Indian. We failed to get sight of an Indian, therefore cannot say whether Captain Peoples' estimate of

MARINDA ADELAIDE GEE WOOD, Oct. 1833, June 1923. Married in San Francisco in 1864. She resided for over fifty years at Robinson's Ferry.

VIEW OF ROBINSON's FERRY (now Melones) on the Stanislaus River, probably taken in the late 1880's. Road beyond leads to Jamestown and Sonora. Harvey Wood's home among the trees was destroyed by fire in 1896, and the ferry building on the right in 1909. Old ferry boat can be seen beyond. There is now a bridge over the river, and the site is completely changed.

9 the Mexican lancers' Valor was correct or not. We were in the saddles from 5 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night, when we returned to the ranch pretty well tired out, without capturing even a poor mustang as a trophy.

This was no doubt, remnants of the Mazatlan Rangers of Massachusetts, who arrived at Corpus Christi from New Orleans, January 20, 1849, and split up at Laredo, the latter part of March. They originally numbered 59; in two divisions, under the command of E. W. Abbott, with these were a number of persons from two or three other companies, making a total of 67.

John H. Peoples was editor of the *Corpus Christi Star*. He was induced to act as guide, along with Colonel Evertson, for the Mazatlan Rangers, from Corpus Christi to Presido del Norte. He changed his mind apparently, and decided to go to California himself, taking the short cut upon which Wood met him. He was the pioneer of the American press in Mexico, and who was favorably known as an army correspondent, under the signature of "Corporal" and "Chapparral."

He later became well known in California. In the winter of 1849 he was in charge of a Government-financed relief expedition to aid the overland immigrants.

He was a passenger on, and lost his life, in the wreck of the *Arabian* which cleared at San Francisco for Trinidad Bay, on March 10, 1850. His body was buried at Point George.

The first day's journey after leaving San Catarina I witnessed a new mode of farming, saw a man plowing with a wooden plow, not a particle of iron about it, also met one of their two wheeled carts with three yoke of oxen attached. The cart was made of wood and rawhide, the wheels were models of workmanship — looked as if they were sawn off from a log some four to six feet in diameter and one foot in thickness, then punched a hole through for an axle and the wheel was complete. It required from four to six yoke of oxen to draw the cart lightly loaded. Their manner of hitching up the oxen was by lashing the rope to the horns with rawhide, ox bows not having yet been introduced to the farmer of Mexico. Then to cap the climax I saw a chap hoeing corn with a musket slung to his back, keeping one eye on his work, the other looking out for Comanches.

We arrived at the city of Chihuahua\* May 1st, after a tedious journey, having taken a short cut over a dry, barren country, frequently forty to fifty miles between watering places. Found Chihuahua quite a city, but like all other 10 places in Mexico, looked as if it had seen more prosperous days. We remained in Chihuahua until May 8th, had a chance to see all the sights, even to the afternoon drives of the aristocracy. Didn't they enjoy it though! Seated in a great, lumbering carriage of the style of one hundred years ago, with four mules hitched on, the driver riding one of the wheel animals, the occupants laying back with all the dignity, if not the grace of the cod-fish aristocracy, which we poor Yankees were bound to show off our independence by an occasional afternoon's ride, mounted on our almost broken down mules. Quite a contrast between our turnouts and the young Mexicans mounted on their gay steeds with all the trappings, fancy saddles, silver mounted bridles, never lacking the jingling spurs, without which the outfit would be considered incomplete. Another requisite for a first-class horseman, his pants must have silver buttons every two inches from the waist down on the outside of [the] leg, a firm easy and graceful position in the saddle no matter how much the steed may rear and plunge, the horseman is prepared to meet the carriage containing his fair one, or if permitted to ride alongside of the carriage, the grace and ease with which the horseman will raise his hat and salute the fair one, while the horse is plunging about

enough to unseat any common rider, our caballero appears in all his glory; apparently capable of retaining his seat even if the horse should turn a double summersault. We remained in Chihuahua one Sunday, attended church in the morning and a bull fight in the afternoon and saw four bulls tortured and killed in the usual manner, but failed to enjoy the sport, as it is called by the natives.

Chihuahua, "City of the North," the Mexicans regard it second only to the Paradise their Padres tell them of, it is their pride and their delight, and is the capital of the State of the same name, and was settled towards the close of the 17th century by some adventurers for the purpose of working the rich silver mines discovered about that time. The city is regularly laid out, with broad and clean streets, some of which are paved. It contains handsome and well built houses, both of stone and adobe. The population in 1849 was about 15,000 and contained a large number of American merchants. Durivage arrived the very same day as Wood.

On May 8th, we bid goodbye to Chihuahua, starting out with our animals feeling much better and with more experience in packing a mule, which, by the way, requires some practice to pack in good shape. From this time on we discarded the tent as unnecessary baggage, we spread our blankets down under a tree or bush and slept better than most of [the] people who have the best of accommodations. The country we passed through was almost barren of game and for supplies we depended upon the small settlements we occasionally found. On getting near a town our messmate, Mr. Fouse, would go in advance and secure bread, milk and eggs or any other luxury he could find so that on our arrival we could soon have a good meal to sit down to. On arriving at Yaous<sup>\*</sup> we found the town in possession of six Apache Indians, who were amusing themselves by riding from store to store and making the proprietors furnish liquor or anything else they demanded. The Apaches professed to be very friendly to our party; they were well mounted and made the Mexicans believe they numbered several hundred a short distance from the town. From Yaous to Tuscon<sup>\*</sup> we found 12 several villages completely deserted, caused by Apaches making a raid on the place killing a few of the inhabitants and helping themselves to stock or anything else they fancied.

Janos was one of seven presidios or military posts, a line of which was formed along the frontier as early as 1718, and used in subduing the Indians and protecting the inhabitants. It was a desolate place built of adobe, with a population of about 300.

Tucson was an ancient adobe town of roughly 500 inhabitants. It was so unimpressive that the overlanders mentioned it primarily as a place where they could obtain a small amount of food. More important even than the town, in the eyes of one diarist, "was a wretched creature assuming the attitude of a woman, but said to be an hermaphrodite, who was showing her deformity for presents."

From Tuscon on to the Gila river, some ninety miles, we found no water and suffered considerable from the want of it; \* passed down the southern bank of the Gila to the Pino village. The chief \* of the Pinos was very kind to us, but the tribe did not appear to know the value of money; red flannel shirts were in demand, and a new silver half dollar piece would be taken in payment for provisions in preference to a \$10 gold piece: While camping at the Pino village, an incident occurred that showed the great command the chief had over his subjects. One of our party had a buffalo robe stolen from his bed, he complained to the chief of his loss. The chief called his warriors around him and made them quite a long speech, all we could understand was now and then the word "Americans," the rest sounded more like grunting than talking, but his speech had the desired effect, the missing robe was returned by the thief without any explanation. Had the thief been a white man, talking would hardly have restored it. It was at the Pino village I saw the best dressed Indian, or one that thought he was. He had on a black satin

"PROTECTION PAPER," a form of passport, and an identification, and proof of American citizenship. Issued by various states, and also the United States Government, to the Argonauts of Forty-nine. To be used in case of distress or want in South an Central America and in crossing through Mexico.

13 vest, a heavy beaver cloth overcoat and a tall plug hat, no other clothing about his person, and a prouder man never walked or strutted about than my favorite.

Arriving at the Gila river on or about the second of June, Durivage wrote: "Mr. Peoples' party [in all probability the Wood's portion of the Kit Carson Association with some others] and that of Mr. Clay Taylor all arrived safe and in very fair order, though some of Mr. Peoples' party who were afoot suffered much."

In all probability this was chief Juan Antonio Llanas, or Banbutt, in the Piman tongue. He was a noble specimen of manhood, a large built man six feet four inches tall. All the emigrants seem to have been impressed with him, and he was highly spoken of by them.

We travelled down the Gila river to a few miles below the junction of the Colorado, \* where we arrived June 15th. We concluded to build a raft \* to take our baggage over on, we had no axes and only two hatchets, so the company found it slow work to get the craft together, but finally succeeded. Our provisions were nearly exhausted and a ninety-mile desert to pass over after

crossing the river made it look rather dreary. The Yuma<sup>\*</sup> Indians were quite numerous near our camp, they appeared to watch all our movements with great interest, and, like ourselves, were short of grub; still they could get along better than we could as they were not particular about the kind of food they ate, as I saw one making a good meal off of decayed drift wood, devouring it with great relish. I concluded he was hungry. After finishing our raft we got the Indians to swim our animals, the river being high and some four hundred feet in width, we thought it best to hire the Indians to get the animals over. The Indians were very unfortunate with every animal that was in 14 good condition, and, what was singular, they would drown close by the opposite shore, and on watching, found the way it was done. Mr. Indian having the end of the rope attached to the mule or horse and swimming along side of the animal, when near the shore would jerk the animal's head under water by using his foot on the slack of the rope, then the carcass would be drawn out on the shore, cut up and devoured by the hungry Indians. They drowned six before we discovered the plan, after that a rifle drawn and aimed at the Indian attempting the trick again prevented any more accidents. After our animals were over we started with our rafts and baggage, passed over safe, made the opposite shore quite a distance below point of starting. Near the shore where the rafts landed it was marshy and shallow so that we had to pack our baggage some ways from the raft. The Indians were very anxious to assist, one of them having a bundle of blankets tried to make off with it through the bushes. Patterson<sup>\*</sup> from New Orleans hailed him twice; not paying any attention to his order, he gave him a charge of buckshot. I shall never forget the yell the Indian gave, sprang into the air and dropped. In an instant two Indians caught the body between them, rushed to the river, sprang in, and the last I saw of them they were making fast time down stream, but I have reason to believe the Indian that was shot never helped unload another raft on the Colorado. In five minutes after the shooting not an Indian could be seen. That night we kept guards out and strict watch, but were not 15 molested. The bundle of blankets the Indian was making off with contained some beans wrapped up inside, all the provisions the owner was possessed of. The next morning we started on our dreary journey across the desert; after traveling all day found an old well<sup>\*</sup> with a dead mule in it; we removed the carcass, cleaned it out and obtained a little water. The next forty-eight hours no water was to be found. A few beans that had been scattered on the ground close by an abandoned

wagon were gathered up by us with as much care as so many gold nuggets for we had eaten the last of our provisions, a little salt was all we had left. On the second day of crossing the desert we found a well hole containing some water, but a written notice posted near warned us against using it as it was poisonous. On looking around in the vicinity of the well, and noting the many skeletons of animals, we concluded not to drink any of the water. For thirty-nine hours our animals traveled without water, as for ourselves, we suffered greatly. Cariso Creek<sup>\*</sup> was reached at last by the advance guard, and after satisfying their thirst they filled up their canteens and hastened back to assist the others, a small cup of water to each sufferer with the assurance of plenty more near at hand, was welcome news indeed. Hunger is dreadful, but extreme thirst is fearful. On reaching 16 the creek my thirst was so great that I drank six pint cups of water, one after the other, before I could stop, then I had to lay down—nearly fainted away—but in an hour or so began to feel hungry, put our last beans to cooking and two of my messmates went back some eight miles to where one of our pack mules gave out and returned with some mule meat, on which we feasted. At Cariso Creek we found on our arrival an original character, a real, down east Yankee. He had been there several days when we arrived, trying to recruit his two broken down horses. He appeared in good spirits, taking it easy. He had some two pounds of mule's liver left in the provision line, and that was tainted; he said he managed to get along, and had been feasting on rawhide soup for several days. I asked him where he got the rawhide. "Oh," says he, "plenty of horses and mules have died in this vicinity and the dry atmosphere preserves the hides while the rest of the carcass disappears. I take the hides so found and they make very good soup by boiling them well," or to use his own words, "the gol darned soup would be very good if I had plenty of seasoning to put in."

Wood made very good time from Chihuahua, starting a week after Durivage left that place. Durivage and A. B. Clarke, arrived at the Colorado river June 19th, and 20th.

Later in the year Lieut. Cave J. Coutts and his soldiers ferried the emigrants over the river for 50 cents apiece and 10 cents for cattle. This made the crossing easier than for those that passed earlier, and at the same time provided "Uncle Sam's" soldiers with a lucrative side line, but the emigrants drove them to distraction. Coutts was referred to as a rascal by some. The ferry was operated later by private parties at a rather exorbitant rate.

The earlier emigrants fared better with these Indians; however bad feelings toward the white people developed and their hostility had been increased later in consequence of the various acts and indolence of the emigrants, and by fall the Indians had killed three of the gold seekers.

Probably James Patterson, quartermaster of the Mazatlan Rangers, company No. 1, now traveling with the Wood party.



They followed the Cooke route, and through the desert sands the going was slow. This was probably first well, thirteen miles from the river, mentioned by all the emigrants that traveled this route. Located a short distance from the present Paredones, Baja California, Mexico.

Carrizo Creek near the western boundary of the present Imperial county, California. Twenty-eight miles from third well, and ninety from the Colorado River. Later, during the summer and fall of 1849, there were unusually heavy rains. The Alamo, New River, and Carrizo Creek were the three rivers here that were intermittently flooding the region during heavy rains, then ceasing entirely leaving no trace.

We left Cariso Creek next day anxious to push on and get to some place where provisions could be obtained, made a long day's journey and arrived at an Indian camp towards evening. Fouse and myself went through the camp to see if we could get any provisions, and, in making the search did not stand on ceremony, but wherever any cooking was going on we examined the contents of every kettle, but, hungry as we were, could not eat acorns ground up and boiled, that

THE HARVEY WOOD HOME at Robinson's Ferry, late 1880's. It was destroyed by fire in 1896. Harvey and his wife on the right.

ROBINSON's FERRY on the Stanislaus River. Old ferry boat *Adelaide* view looking west toward Calaveras County. Late 1880's. Views of these old ferry boats are quite rare. This ferry was operated by Harvey Wood from 1856, to his death in 1895; and his heirs until 1909.

17 being all we could find. Just as we were getting discouraged in came an Indian with the hind quarters of a horse, we prevailed on him to sell us a few pounds at 25 cents per pound. He did not wish to part with it at that rate, telling us it was horse and not good for Americans. With the meat we made a good stew; next morning for breakfast we finished the horse stew, traveled all day and camped without anything to eat, packed up early next morning and at ten o'clock came to a ranch where we bought some regular beef, paying high prices for the same.

From that time on to Warner's Ranch<sup>\*</sup> we did not suffer hunger, but the manner in which we were received by many ranchmen was discouraging, get within hailing distance of a farm house, the owner would stand in the doorway and commence yelling, "noy carne! noy mici! noy nada!" the last. "noy nada," in a high key and intended as a clincher, but it was no use, being willing to pay we were determined to have something to eat and generally managed to buy milk and meat.

One hundred and fifty-eight miles from the Colorado River, and one hundred and twenty-four more to Los Angeles. Warner's was a natural stopping place for travelers. It is precisely at the point where the old main road branches, one fork leading south, down the valley of the Agua Caliente to San Diego, the other to Los Angeles. Warner's beef, butter, milk and eggs were much welcomed by the emigrants when available, but they complained that he charged them "high rates."

The country we now traveled through presented a different appearance from Mexico. To see the mountain sides covered with trees and not the cacti was a change for the better. Water was also more abundant. On the 4th of July we camped near the city of Los Angeles, that now thriving place even then appeared a very pretty place. We were enabled to live once more on good food, griddle cakes, or "slap jacks," as we called them, were the favorite dish. We devoured so many slap jacks through Mexico that our mess received the name of "the slap jack mess." Saleratus running short we would use ashes, sometimes the cakes were rather heavy, but after almost starving, we considered slap jacks, as we say in the mines, "way up grub." We left Los Angeles July 7th, eager to commence mining for gold, as we were shown a few specimens in Los Angeles which gave us all the gold fever. We would occasionally meet a party of Mexicans returning from the mines and the only thing that prevented our talking them to death by asking questions, was we could not talk Spanish and they did not understand English. One day, however, we met a Dutchman from the mines with a mule load of gold, going to Sonora, Mexico. Now was the chance to find out all about the gold mines, the questions were rained down on the Dutchman so fast that it was enough to drive a sensitive person crazy, but the Dutchman was equal to the occasion. He quietly puffed away at his pipe and after some ten or fifteen minutes, when a lull in the storm of questions gave him a chance to reply he says, "if you pees lucky you gets plenty gold." Not another word could we get from him. Often in years after, while engaged in mining, have the Dutchman's words recurred to me as containing the truth in as few words as could be used.

Our route from Los Angeles to the mines was via. Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and San Juan, passed over the Coast Range of mountains into the San Joaquin Valley and 19 arrived on the Merced river July 30th, where we mined our first gold. Our mess consisting of Fouse, Ackerly, Huyler and myself and a Mr. March,<sup>\*</sup> arrived in the mines ahead of all the rest of the Carson Association, leaving them scattered along the way from the Colorado river to the mines.<sup>\*</sup>

John F. Marsh of New Hampshire, a member of the Kit Carson Association.”

The idea of the great fortunes awaiting them in California was so uppermost in the minds of the emigrants that they fairly fought among themselves over delays, thus splitting up large parties into many smaller ones, leaving the weak to shift for themselves.

Instead of arriving in the mines with two mules each and three months' provisions as promised by the originator of the association, our mess of four owned one crooked neck horse and one mule, the journey from Los Angeles being mostly performed on foot. All the clothing I had was on my person, so that when it was washing day I was obliged to select the heat of the day and dry the clothes in sections. Our mess had in money just 50 cents left which we paid to a store keeper on the Merced for a glass of poor brandy to cure Huylar of colic. The diggings on the Merced we found would pay about \$4.00 per day to the man with our way of mining—washing the dirt in pans, or as the miners term it, “panning out.” On asking the store keeper the price of different articles and of different kinds of provisions, found his price list very simple and easily understood. “All kinds of provisions except ham, \$1.00 per pound. Hams \$1.50, nails 25 cents each.” Gold dust he paid \$16. per ounce for, or what he called an ounce.

As we needed four tin pans for panning out the gold and the price was \$ 10 each for pans, we concluded to dispose of 20 our crooked neck horse to the merchant, he having took a side view at the animal one day and not noticing any defect offered us four ounces for the horse which was gladly accepted and traded out, the four pans and a few provisions using up the horse. The next day the merchant after saddling up his new purchase, mounted for a ride, but concluded after seeing that the horse's head had a lean of some 15 degrees to one side, to delay the trip. Then he had the impudence to growl because we did not point out to him the peculiar makeup of the animal before selling, just as if we were going to show up all the weak points of our property in exchange for tin pans at \$10 each.

The merchant never forgave us and as he wanted cash down afterwards for all his wares we concluded to change our quarters. Our travelling companion, Mr. Marsh, of New Hampshire, being a very smooth talker and the fortunate owner of a “boiled,” or white shirt with other clothes to correspond, concluded he would try and see how his credit stood with the merchant, so the evening before we left the Merced, Mr. Marsh selected a fine ham at the store and bought the same on time,

price \$1.80 per pound, also quite a stock of other provisions to be paid for at the same time he paid for the ham. The next day when our mess left the Merced for the Stanislaus River, “lo and behold,” Mr. Marsh joined us a few miles from Merced, well provisioned—on time. To this day I am not certain that the time for payment ever arrived, for within a year Mr. Marsh, made some two thousand dollars and the last I saw of him he was making 21 good time for San Francisco, expecting to take the first steamer for his old home in New Hampshire. From the Merced after crossing the Tuolumne River, we came to the Stanislaus, crossed the same at McLean's Ferry<sup>\*</sup> and camped near the mouth of Indian Gulch,<sup>\*</sup> just below what is now called Robinson's Ferry,<sup>\*</sup> near which point I have resided ever since.

McLeans Ferry was located on the Stanislaus River between Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, about one and a half miles above Robinsons Ferry, just west of the present day Parrotts Ferry bridge on the road from Columbia to Angels Camp.

There were two other Indian Gulches, one in the northern Mokelumne region, and the other in the Mariposa region. This particular one, however, was located on the Stanislaus River in Calaveras County, just below Robinsons Ferry.

Now known as Melones on highway 49.

Robinson and Mead then (Aug. 15th, 1849), had a store near the mouth of Indian Gulch, kept in a tent. Mr. Mead, a perfect stranger to us all, welcomed us on our arrival saying, “Camp anywhere around here boys, and any provisions you want I will furnish you, money or no money—price fifty cents per pound.” A fall of fifty cents per pound on provisions and an increase of 200 per cent in the diggings was encouraging to us all and we went to work with a will.

After mining until September I took my first trip to San Francisco to look after some goods that were shipped around the Horn to Ackerly, Huyler, and myself. Travelling at that time differed so much from the present mode I will give an account of the trip: Two acquaintances with myself left the Stanislaus River in the afternoon, our blankets packed on a mule together with a frying pan, coffee pot, and a tin cup and tin plate for each, and a few provisions. No extra clothing<sup>22</sup> was considered necessary. Thus equipped we started for Stockton on foot, driving the mule ahead of us. We took our time, camped out every night. A bush or tree to spread our blankets under we preferred to any house. The food generally used was hard bread and beefsteak with a cup of coffee drank out of tin cups, no vegetables could be had at any price. We enjoyed the trip very much. On

arriving at Stockton we camped outside of town and kept our own hotel. Stockton in September, 1849, was not a handsome place, but money was plentiful and the gamblers were reaping a harvest from the miners who had been fortunate in finding good claims, made money fast and spent it still faster. Monte was the favorite game with the Mexicans. Often bags of gold dust would be staked on the turning of a card with apparent indifference as to the result. No steamboat had yet been put on between Stockton and San Francisco so we were obliged to take passage on a schooner paying \$16 passage. We made the trip in six days, tying up in the tules at night at the mercy of millions of mosquitoes, was anything but pleasant. San Francisco in September, 1849, I suppose, presented a different appearance from any other city in the world. Canvas tents or cheap frame houses were going up on all sides. The vessel with our goods not having arrived we made but a short stay in San Francisco. On the return trip to Stockton we were more fortunate, took passage on a small sloop and made the trip in two days. On my return to the mines found my partners doing very well. The day before I returned, Huylar and Fouse had made some two ounces each and concluded to 23 have a grand supper by themselves. They invested \$8 for a small can of preserves, \$4 for one can of sardines and a few other extras making the cost of their supper \$16 each. How it tasted I cannot say as no part of it was visible on my arrival. In November, 1849, I went to San Francisco again accompanied by messmate J. M. Fouse, who had concluded to quit mining and go to work at his trade of tinsmith. I was sorry to part company with Fouse, we had traveled and messed together from New York to the mines, passed through many trials and hardships, shared our last morsel of food, not knowing where the next would come from; among all my acquaintances I have never yet found a more noble, generous, good-hearted man than Jacob M. Fouse, of Baltimore. We parted in San Francisco in November, 1849, never to meet on earth again. He succeeded in business, had his wife and family come out to California, and at or near Grass Valley in 1856, (I believe), surrounded by his family, he departed this life.

The goods that were shipped to us around the Horn had arrived, but the storage I had to pay was nearly the value of the goods. The rainy season had commenced and long legged boots were scarce, the price going up to \$ 100 per pair; one case of boots had been shipped to us among other supplies,

but they could not be found, nor have I ever found out who did have the benefit of that case of boots.

Returning to the Stanislaus River from my trip to San Francisco, we built our cabin for the winter, sides of logs, with canvas roof and the usual stone chimney of that period; 24 only in putting it up found the draft was always the wrong way, all the smoke coming in the cabin instead of passing out, but on tearing down and rebuilding we were quite successful.

We had some very good diggings near us—Jackass Gulch, in Tuolumne county, and Indian Gulch, in Calaveras county, yielded large amounts of gold. El Dorado Bar,<sup>\*</sup> between McLeans Ferry and Coyote Creek,<sup>\*</sup> was found to be exceedingly rich. The “Independent Twelve Company”<sup>\*</sup> had a very good claim on the Bar. They had a way of mining without exerting themselves much that I suppose proved as beneficial to them financially, as to work steady ten hours a day. The Twelve men had one rocker, they managed to keep going until about ten o'clock a.m. with the assistance of from four to six bottles of brandy at \$4 per bottle; by ten o'clock they would be so much fatigued that to work any more that day was too hard on their system, therefore after washing out the rocker and getting from 24 to 36 ounces of gold, and laying in a fresh supply of brandy they would rest the balance of the day by getting gloriously drunk. This they continued doing while the claim lasted, and when it began to weaken they sought new and better diggings. It was always a mystery to me what particular qualifications a worthless drunken vagabond possessed that he almost invariably had the richest and best claims, while a hard-working, industrious

TYPICAL PASSPORT of the Mexican Government, issued to prospective gold-hunters contemplating taking the Mexican route to California.

25 man, striving to make a fortune, very often found it barely possible to make expenses. In the spring of 1850 good diggings were found where Columbia,<sup>\*</sup> Tuolumne county, now stands. At that time Columbia was the prettiest camp I ever saw in the mines, groves of pine trees all about the place, and at night the camp fires scattered among the pines, the miners resting after the day's work (that is the steady portion) in groups of from four to six, telling over their trials and hardships

either “around the Horn” or across the plains, while in the business portion of the camp the great excitement was about the gambling table. The large blue tent seemed to be the center of attraction.

Chis Lillie,<sup>\*</sup> the prize fighter, could be seen dealing “monte” with all the grace of a professional, much more gentlemanly in his dealings than many others who followed the profession.

On the Stanislaus River, near Indian Gulch.

Near Indian Gulch, on the Stanislaus River, Calaveras County. It was most probably named for the coyote mining that was popular with the Mexicans and who frequented this area in great numbers.

A locally formed mutual mining company.

March 1850, then known as American Camp, later as Hildreths Diggings.

Christopher Lillie was a young professional fighter, one of the first to arrive in California. He was quiet mannered and had the appearance of a gentleman. The Vigilantes of San Francisco, in 1856, invited him to leave California. He went to Panama and Realejo, where he was shanghaied by Captain Knote, of the United States Navy, murdered and dumped into the sea, for the possession of his trade goods, some jewelry and \$ 1,500 in gold.

My prospecting in Columbia in May, 1850, did not prove profitable although we got one pan of dirt that was good. We went into an old shaft some 12 feet deep and found a narrow pay streak running into a partition between that and another shaft, commenced taking it out; could see the gold every stroke of the pick; we soon found some one was working on the same pay streak from the adjoining shaft, therefore we worked lively; soon a sharp crowbar came through from the other side and a Mexican sung out: “caramba!”

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Then the strife was who could get the most of the rich dirt; I am sorry to admit the Mexican beat the Yankee, for he had seven ounces in his pan and we only had \$70.

Sixteen feet square was then called as much ground as one man was entitled to hold, which brought the different owners close together. The Mexicans had the advantage in one respect, they could run drifts under ground and the surface showed no indications of having been worked. I saw one American sadly disappointed after working several days sinking his shaft anticipating a rich yield on getting down to bedrock; he was suddenly precipitated up to his neck by the bottom of his shaft falling into a drift occupied by a Mexican busily engaged in taking out rich pay. The air was blue with curses for awhile, but as the best of his claim was worked out by the Mexican before the American struck bedrock, he had to make the best of it. Very rich diggings were also struck in May,

1850, at Scorpion Gulch<sup>\*</sup> and Carsons, Calaveras county. The amount taken out at Carsons was enormous, some quite heavy nuggets were found, but as usual fortune did not always favor the most deserving.

Both Scorpion Gulch and Carsons are near Robinsons Ferry.

At Carsons a prospector came into camp one day dead broke in finance, called at the trading post, made known his condition, then went out to try his luck; in less than an hour he found a seven pound piece of gold; a happier miner I never saw before or since. As for myself, I was never very successful at mining; had some good claims, but none of them to rank as first-class.

In May, 1856, I bought an interest in the Robinsons Ferry 27 property, located on the Stanislaus River between Angels Camp in Calaveras county, and Sonora in Tuolumne county, where I have resided ever since, (June, 1878).<sup>\*</sup>

The date this sketch was prepared, but it was not published until 1896.

As the seasons come and go many changes have taken place, many once prosperous mining camps have now become almost deserted. An occasional 49er can be seen, generally poor, grey-headed, broken down specimen of humanity.

Of the famous Carsons Association which numbered 53 members on leaving New York in February, 1849, I do not know the P. O. address of a single living member; many have gone the long journey while I yet remain in the mines, running the ferry boats at Robinsons Ferry on the Stanislaus.

HARVEY WOOD, P.O. Address ANGELS CAMP, Calaveras County, Cal.

SPECIALLY printed for members of the ZAMORANO CLUB of Los Angeles as a keepsake from John B. Goodman. 200 signed and numbered copies, of which 100 are for sale, were printed by Grant Dahlstrom at the Castle Press in Pasadena, California, December, 1955